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NEGATIVE BURN

64 PAGES

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS
EDVIN BIUKOVIC
BRIAN BOLLAND
IAN CARNEY
COLLEEN DORAN
WARREN ELLIS
PAUL FRICKE
BRYAN J. L. GLASS
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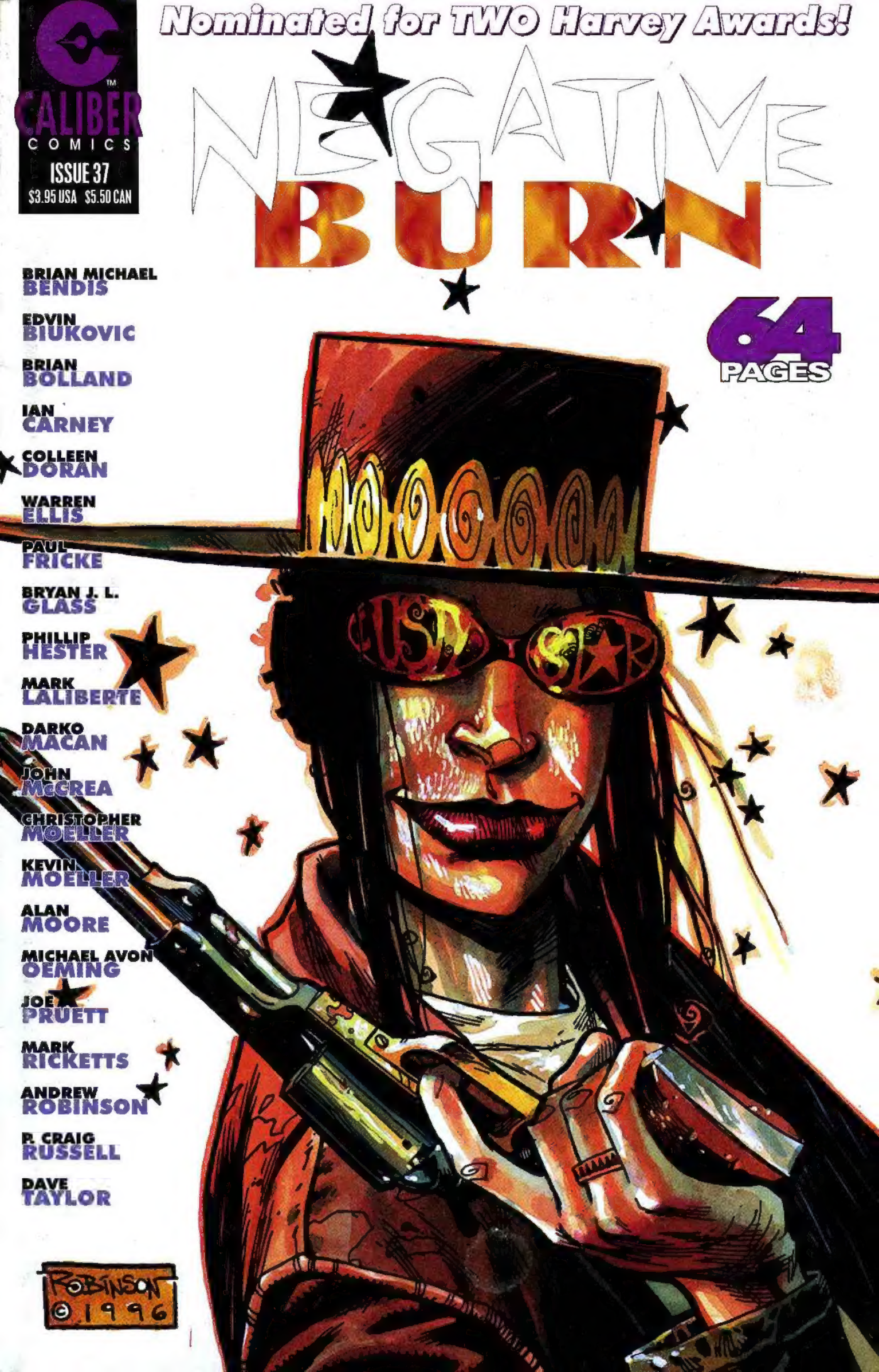

Joe Pruett / Editor
VOLUME ONE • NUMBER THIRTY-SEVEN

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illustrated by Andrew Robinson

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DUSTY STAR

in

"WHERE THE CHIPS FALL"

TALKIN: JOE

CRAPPY DRAWINS: ANDY

LETTERS: FOXY ROXY

A
PRUETT - ROBINSON
PRODUCTION

I CALL YER BLUFF, GIRLIE.
FULL HOUSE. READ 'EM AND WEEP, ORPHAN MAKER.
DAG NABBIT!!
COME TO MAMA.
Y'ALL NEED ANOTHER PLAYER?

BRING THE BOYS BACK HOME
KREED
SIT ON DOWN...WHAT'D YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS?
CROWE... MARKUS CROWE
WE PLAYING FIVE CARD DRAW?
UH... YEAH. WHAT'S THAT?
THIS HERE IS MY POKERPAL 300. A CARD-PLAYER'S BEST FRIEND. IT'S THE LATEST MODEL, YOU KNOW.
LA DE DA DA. YOUR DEAL, FELLA.
OH GOODY! MY DEAL.

I WON AGAIN! THE POKERPAL WAS RIGHT! AGAIN!
I LOVE THIS MACHINE. IT'S SIMPLY MARVELOUS.
I'VE... HAD... ENOUGH.
THAT'S IT! RULES OR NO RULES!
THIS THING HAS GOT TO GO!
SLAM

NO! NOT MY POKERPAL!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
OH, BABY, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?
BLAM!
I SAID, "NOW!"
MARKUS, I SUGGEST YOU GET YOUR SORRY REAR-END BACK OVER IN YOUR CHAIR AND LET'S START PLAYIN' POKER THE RIGHT AND NATURAL WAY.
BUT...
GEE, DID YOU LOSE AGAIN, MARKUS? YOU MUST BE HAVING A RUN OF BAD LUCK, WOULDN'T YOU SAY, FELLAS?
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
the end

MR. MAMOULIAN

A REALLY GOOD BOOK

8·11 88 BOLAND 40

SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY... YOU KNOW... PRETENDING I DIDN'T KNOW YOU, AND EVERYTHING.
OH, THAT'S OKAY.
I MEAN YOU KNOW HOW IT IS... I DON'T THINK SUZY COULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT... WELL, "US"!
OF COURSE NOT.
AND WHAT I SAID TO HER ABOUT YOU BEING LIKE SOME KIND OF LARGE RODENT, IT WAS ALL PART OF OUR COVER... I HOPE YOU DIDN'T THINK...
NO IT'S OKAY. I UNDERSTAND.
SO YOU'RE NOT UPSET WITH ME OR ANYTHING?
NO. REALLY.
THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU TO THE "LAND WHERE EVERYTHING'S JUST THE WAY YOU WANT IT." THE LAND WHERE THERE IS NO WAR! NO HUNGER, NO DISEASE, AND NO HYPOCRISY!
THE LAND WHERE THE WHOLE OF MANKIND EXISTS IN A BLISSFUL STATE OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION!
AND WHERE WOMEN WEAR NOTHING BUT ELBOW LENGTH LACE GLOVES AND SHEER BLACK STOCKINGS...
IT DOESN'T APPEAL.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT DOESN'T APPEAL!? OF COURSE IT APPEALS! YOU'RE SULKING! AREN'T YOU?! YOU'RE SULKING!
NO! I APPRECIATE YOU ASKING ME. REALLY. I'D GO, BUT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A REALLY GOOD BOOK.
I'VE HURT YOUR FEELINGS, HAVEN'T I.
NO! HONESTLY! IT'S JUST THAT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS REALLY GOOD BIT IN THIS BOOK AND...
SO WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED IT... LIKE NEXT WEEK OR SOMETHING?
THAT'D BE FINE.
OKAY, NEXT WEEK THEN.
FINE.

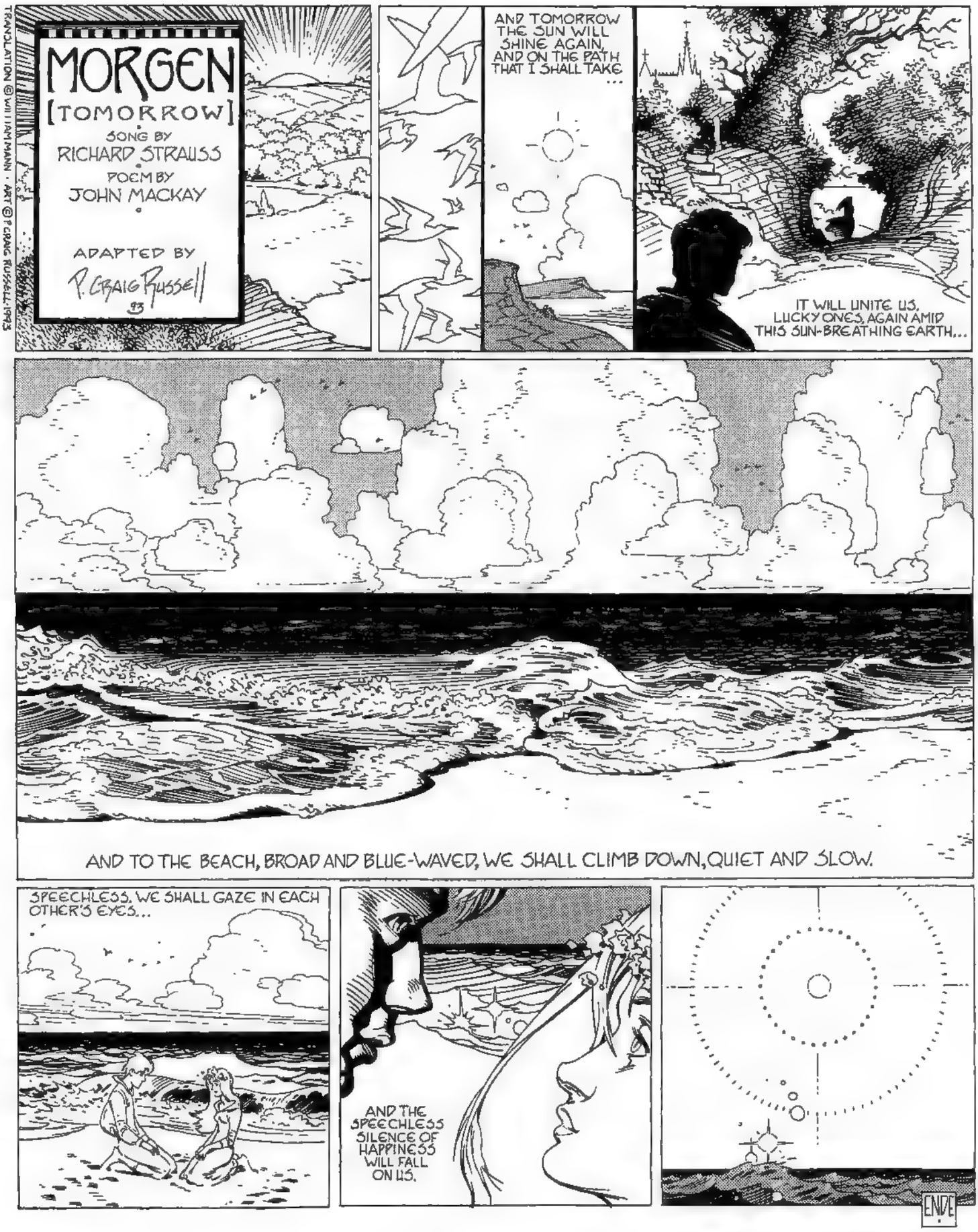
THE THIRST

STORY: DARKO MACAN
ART: EDVIN BIUKOVIĆ

NO!
CRASH
I CAN'T HELP IT. THE THIRST IS STRONGER...
STRONGER!
FORGIVE ME, ALL MY VICTIMS OF THIS NIGHT...
...'CAUSE NONE OF YOU KNOWS MY THIRST!

I SENSE...
...A HUMAN!
LIQUOR STORE
DRINK... I'M DYING WITHOUT IT...
OH, GOD ... I... NEED A... DRINK!
3

GROIN
GROIN
THANK YOU ...MY BROTHER!
MACAN & BIUKOVIĆ '89
END


MORGEN
[TOMORROW]
SONG BY
RICHARD STRAUSS
POEM BY
JOHN MACKAY
ADAPTED BY
P. CRAIG RUSSELL
'93
TRANSLATION © WILLIAM MANN · ART © P. CRAIG RUSSELL 1993
AND TOMORROW THE SUN WILL SHINE AGAIN, AND ON THE PATH THAT I SHALL TAKE ...
IT WILL UNITE US, LUCKY ONES, AGAIN AMID THIS SUN-BREATHING EARTH...
AND TO THE BEACH, BROAD AND BLUE-WAVED, WE SHALL CLIMB DOWN, QUIET AND SLOW.
SPEECHLESS, WE SHALL GAZE IN EACH OTHER'S EYES...
AND THE SPEECHLESS SILENCE OF HAPPINESS WILL FALL ON US.
ENDE

by PHILLIP HESTER

INKS: PAUL FRICKE

LETTERS: GARY PETERSON

I KNOW! I KNOW! THERE'S, LIKE, THIS KID IN MY CLASS, CLEMENT. REALLY, HIS NAME IS CLEMENT; ANYWAY, HE IS WEIRD. COMPLETELY WEIRD, AND SMART, LIKE A COMPUTER GENIUS, YOU KNOW?

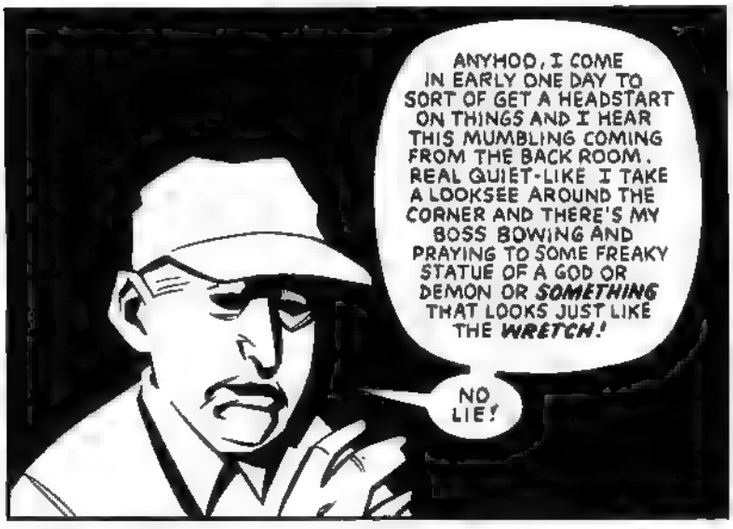
SO, HE'S LIKE A TOTAL OUTCAST, RIGHT? AND HE MOVED HERE JUST A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, SO HE'S GOT, LIKE, ZERO FRIENDS, UNLESS YOU COUNT ALL THE OTHER SUPERGEEKS. AND HE'S ALWAYS SNEAKING AROUND AND MUMBLING TO HIMSELF LIKE HE'S ACTING OUT ALL HIS LITTLE D&D ADVENTURES IN REAL LIFE. ALSO, SOMETIMES HE JUST STARES AT YOU, LIKE HE THINKS HE CAN SEE THROUGH YOU OR SOMETHING. IT'S FREAKY!

HE'S ALWAYS SCREWING AROUND WITH ELECTRONICS AND COMPUTERS AND EVERYTHING; SO I BET HE COULD BUILD SOME KIND OF EQUIPMENT TO DO ALL THAT STUFF THE WRETCH IS SUPPOSED TO DO. MAYBE HE DOES ALL THAT SPOOKY STUFF TO GET SOME ATTENTION OR MAYBE EVEN SOME KIND OF REVENGE ON US POPULAR KIDS, LIKE THAT OLD MOVIE "CARRIE," RIGHT?

AMBER VAN WAARDHUIZEN
STUDENT

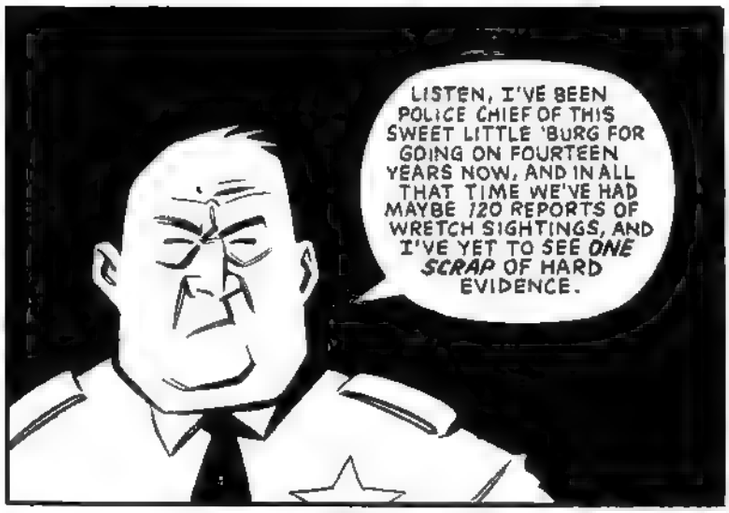
I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS. AS YOU KNOW, THE WRETCH IS A SUPER HERO, THUS, I'VE FOCUSED MY INVESTIGATION ON INDIVIDUALS DISPLAYING CLASSIC DUAL IDENTITY BEHAVIOR.
MY PRIME CANDIDATE IS Mr. WARREN; SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AND DEBATE TEAM COACH.
HIS PHYSIQUE IS SLIM, BUT POWERFUL. HIS BEHAVIOR CONFORMS TO A STRICT MORAL CODE. HIS MIND IS KEEN, COMPARABLE ON EVERY LEVEL WITH BOND OR MACGYVER.
I'VE TESTED HIS REFLEXES BY DROPPING A BEAKER IN CHEMISTRY LAB, WHICH HE CAUGHT WITH EASE. I ESTIMATE HIS REFLEXES TO BE THE EQUIVALENT OF WOLVERINE OR BATMAN, BORDERING ON SPIDER-MAN.
FINALLY, THE WRETCH AND Mr. WARREN HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN TOGETHER. COINCIDENCE? I THINK NOT.
I WILL BIDE MY TIME; WHEN MY PROOF IS IRREFUTABLE, I WILL CONFRONT WARREN. AT THAT POINT I SHALL COMPEL HIM TO MAKE ME HIS SIDEKICK. I WILL BE KNOWN AS THE AGONIZER.
'NUFF SAID.
CLEMENT DOUGLAS
STUDENT

I ALREADY TOLD EVERYONE, BUT THEY ALL THINK I'M FULL OF IT.
WELL, LAST SUMMER I WENT TO WORK FOR THAT FOREIGN FELLA WHO BOUGHT THE PAWN SHOP STOCKING SHELVES AND CLEANING UP AND WHAT NOT.

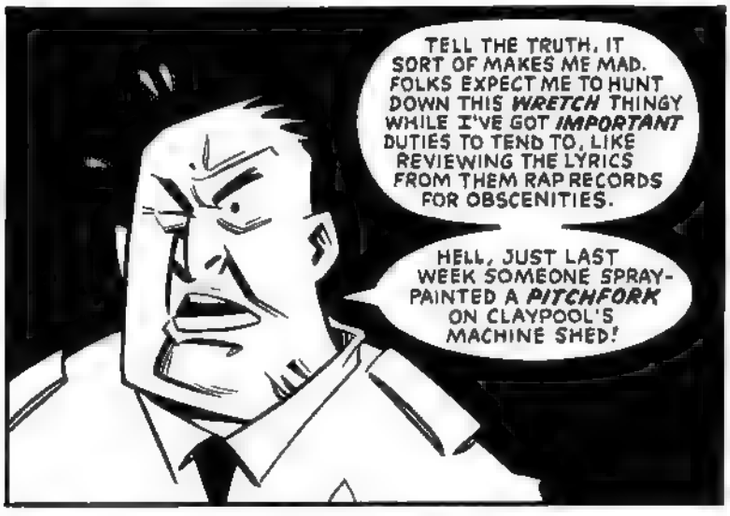

ANYHOO, I COME IN EARLY ONE DAY TO SORT OF GET A HEADSTART ON THINGS AND I HEAR THIS MUMBLING COMING FROM THE BACK ROOM. REAL QUIET-LIKE I TAKE A LOOKSEE AROUND THE CORNER AND THERE'S MY BOSS BOWING AND PRAYING TO SOME FREAKY STATUE OF A GOD OR DEMON OR ***SOMETHING*** THAT LOOKS JUST LIKE THE ***WRETCH!***
NO LIE!

SO THEN HE HEARS ME OR SOMETHING AND WHIPS HIS HEAD AROUND, YELLING, "***IN FIDO!***" "***IN FIDO!***" OR SOMETHING. IT FREAKED ME OUT. I TOOK OUTTA THERE LIKE A HOUND DOG SHOT WITH ROCK SALT AND NEVER BEEN BACK.

WADE GILMORE
HANDYMAN


LISTEN, I'VE BEEN POLICE CHIEF OF THIS SWEET LITTLE 'BURG FOR GOING ON FOURTEEN YEARS NOW, AND IN ALL THAT TIME WE'VE HAD MAYBE 120 REPORTS OF WRETCH SIGHTINGS, AND I'VE YET TO SEE ONE SCRAP OF HARD EVIDENCE.

YOU ASK ME, IT'S SOMETHING THE KIDS DO. LIKE A TRADITION, SEE? EACH SENIOR CLASS HAS TO PULL SOME PRANK BIGGER AND BADDER THAN THE LAST CLASS AND THEY BLAME IT ON SOME MYSTERIOUS SPOOK.

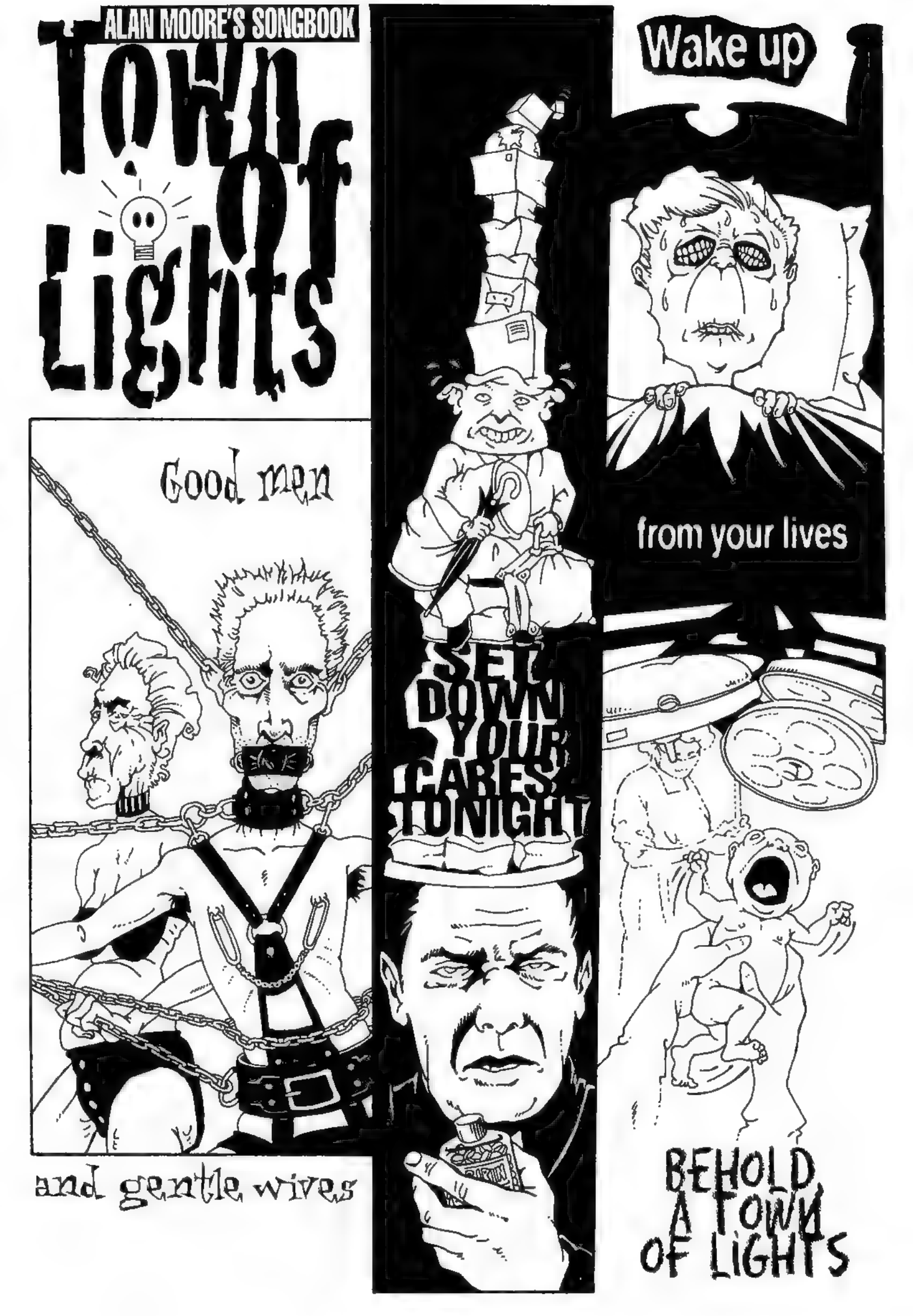

TELL THE TRUTH, IT SORT OF MAKES ME MAD. FOLKS EXPECT ME TO HUNT DOWN THIS WRETCH THINGY WHILE I'VE GOT IMPORTANT DUTIES TO TEND TO, LIKE REVIEWING THE LYRICS FROM THEM RAP RECORDS FOR OBSCENITIES.
HELL, JUST LAST WEEK SOMEONE SPRAY-PAINTED A PITCHFORK ON CLAYPOOL'S MACHINE SHED!

WIN BUCKNER
CONSTABLE

DEWEY MUNHOLLEN AND GOLLY RUPLINGER
DROPOUTS

MARGUARITTE NEUMAN
WIDOW

NO, NO, NO. NOT *WHO* IS THE WRETCH, BUT *WHAT* IS THE WRETCH. THAT IS THE QUESTION.
THE ANSWER IS QUITE COMPLEX I'VE DEVOTED SEVERAL CLASS DISCUSSIONS AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO JUST THIS QUESTION.
MASS HYSTERIA? SOCIETY'S SUBLIMATED GUILT? SHARED FANTASIES OF VIGILANTISM? MISGUIDED SPIRITUALISM? WELL, MUCH LIKE THE *UFO* ABDUCTION EXPERIENCE, WHAT IT ACTUALLY *IS* IS IRRELEVANT. ITS *FUNCTION* IN THE GROUP DYNAMIC IS PARAMOUNT.
AND THE FUNCTION OF THE WRETCH IN GLASS CITY IS...
uh.
GERRY KLINGHAUS
EDUCATOR
END!

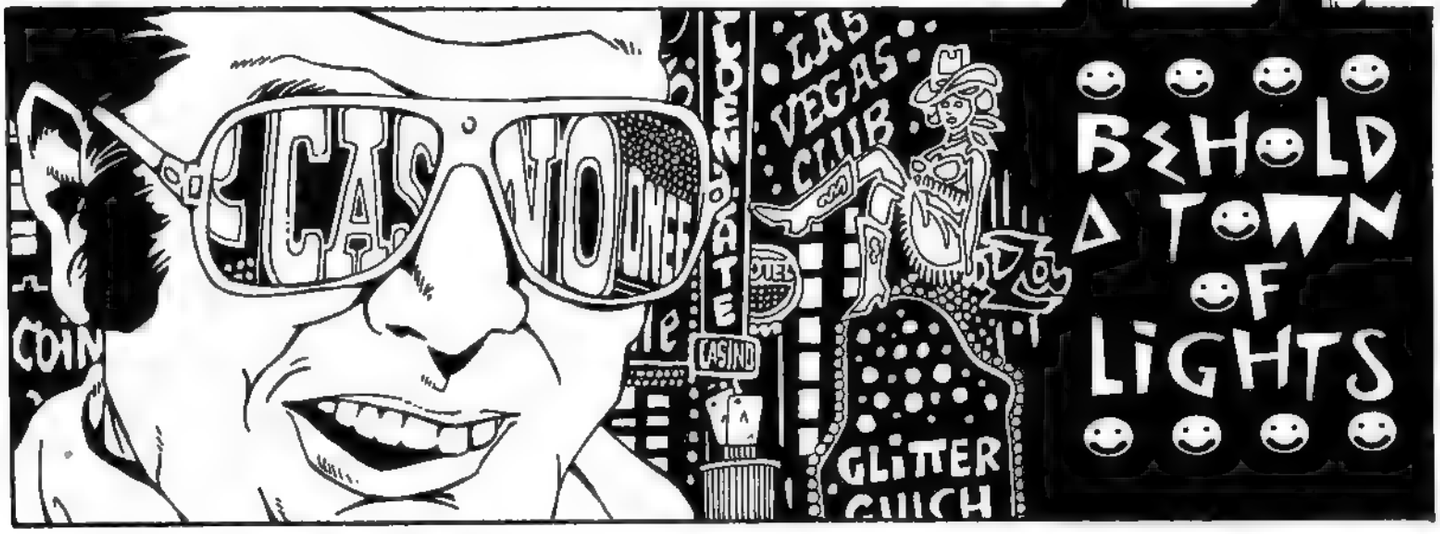

ALAN MOORE'S SONGBOOK
Town of Lights
Good men
and gentle wives
SET DOWN YOUR CARES TONIGHT
Wake up
from your lives
BEHOLD A TOWN OF LIGHTS

TIME
HAS
FAILED
YOU

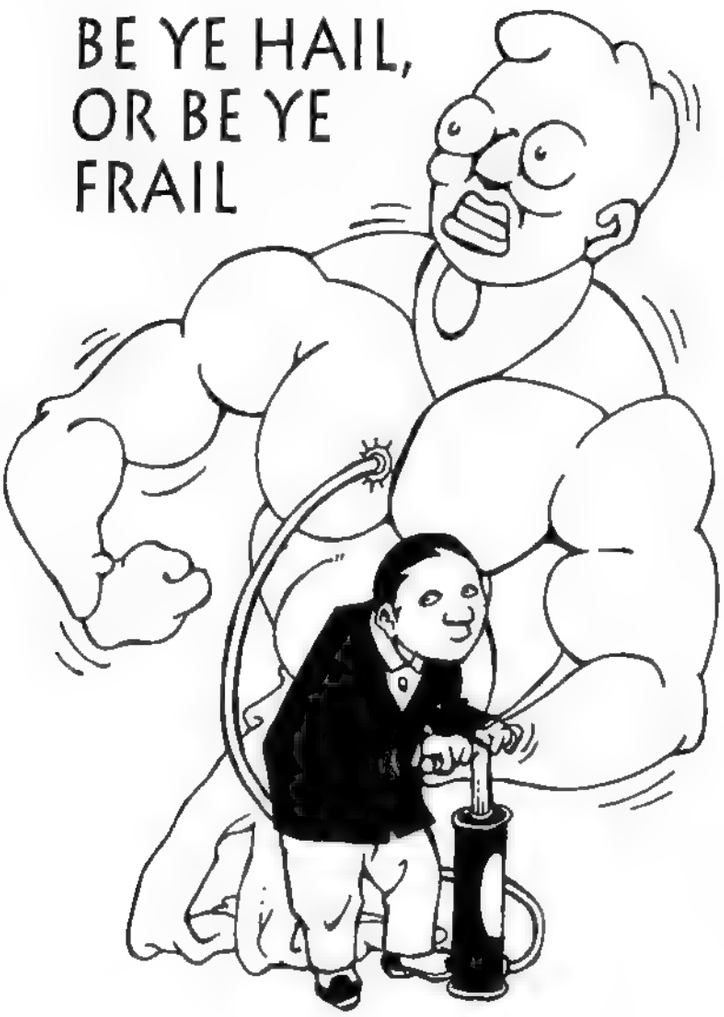
yet now
the streets
are bright
·LIGHTS·
FOR SALE
CHEAP!

There are
angels
in you

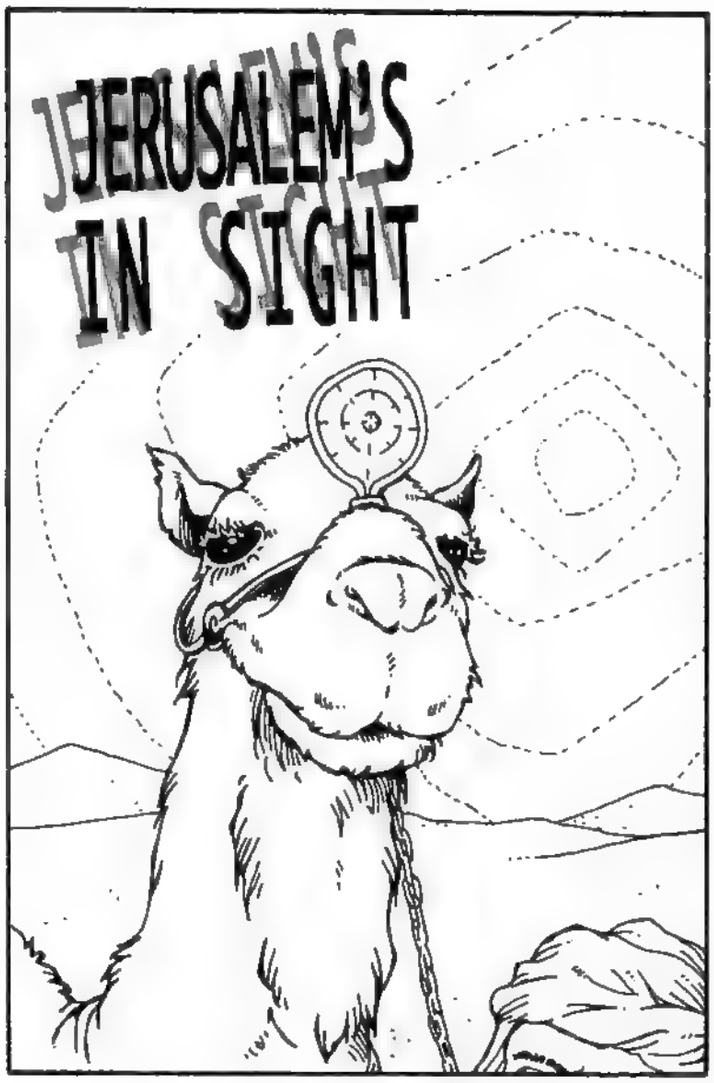
WALK
THROUGH
ALL
YOUR
FOUNDRY
WALLS


COIN
CASINO
LAS
VEGAS
CLUB
CASINO
GLITTER
GULCH
BEHOLD
A TOWN
OF
LIGHTS

BE YE HAIL,
OR BE YE
FRAIL



JERUSALEM'S
IN SIGHT



Leave ye now
your mill,
and jaol

BEHOLD
A
TOWN
OF
LIGHTS

Put on your
Time has Stained you
gowns of white
there are angels in you
Fields again rise through the lands

lyrics alanmoore
art markricketts

Maulwurf Brüder
Design Studio

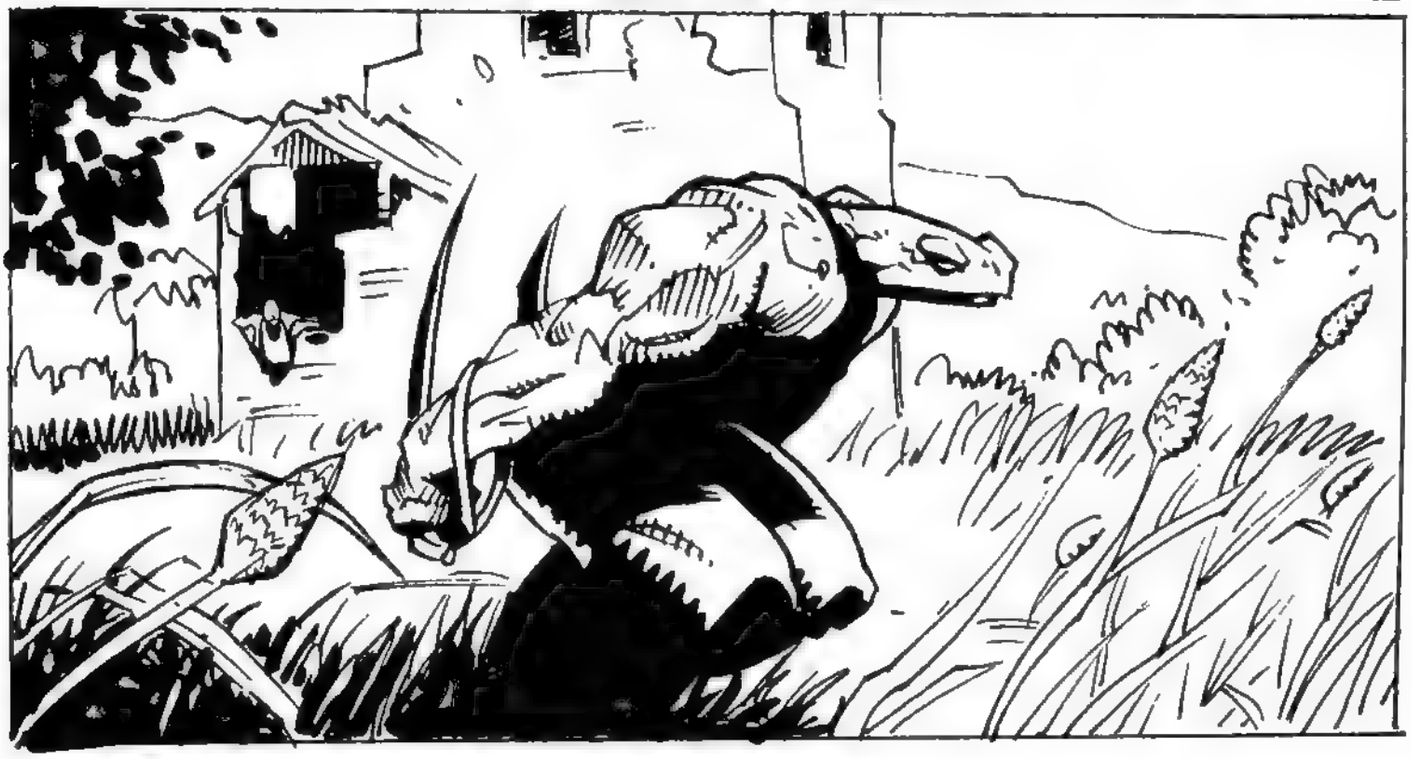
STORY & ART BY
MAULWERF BRÜDER
DESIGN STUDIO

KEVIN MOELLER - WORDS
CHRIS MOELLER - PICTURES

IRON EMPIRES

CHAPTER 3

SECOND PASSAGE



THIS MUST BE THAT KERRN *FIGHTING ART* CALLED "KOZANI WHITE TRIANGLE."
KA-CHING
IT'S EASY TO UNDERESTIMATE THE CREATURE'S *QUICKNESS*.
IT OUGHT TO *LUMBER* AROUND LIKE A BULL, BUT IT DOESN'T. IT *GLIDES*...
SNIP
DAT'S CALLED "PARTING DA MANE."
ISS GUT. I SEE DET NOT TIME FOR YOUR SUNSET.
BOTE YOU AND LITTLE GIRL GOT GOOT FORCHOONS.
GOOD FORTUNE...
I WISH I COULD BELIEVE IN SUCH A THING...
THANK YOU FOR SAVING US.

I TINK MAYBE WE STAY TOOGEDDUH FOR A WHILE. WRITE POETRY TOOGEDDUH.
I HELP YOU PROTECT GIRL. SHE NOT YOORS, I SEE DAT.
SHE IS NOT MY CHILD. BUT SHE IS MY CHARGE.
I COULD USE YOUR HELP...
WHO AM I FOOLING? AT THE RATE I'VE BEEN GOING, IT'S A WONDER WE'RE NOT DEAD ALREADY.
MY FRIENDS CALL ME GRITZ. VOT ISS YOU CALLED?
KHAZAR.
DOT'S GOOT! I LIKE TO SMOKE A NICE GAZAR MYSELF!
HA HA HA!
VE FRIENDS NOW!
>>YAWN<<
UNCLE?
I SHOULDN'T LET HER CALL ME THAT...
UNCLE ...WHO'S THAT?

THSH
THSH
THSH
OH, DAT ISS MY LIDDLE BRUDDA, BEE-NUT.
HE'S A REALLY FAST RUNNAH, JOU KNOW. LOOK AT HIM GO.
BEE-NUT, DEES ARE OUR NEW FRIENDS, GAZAR AND LIDDLE GIRL.
DAT IS A CUTE LIDDLE GIRL.
HALLO, LIDDLE GIRL.
HELLO, PEANUT.
OH! I ALMOST FORGOT, BRUDDA.

XAST
DERE'S A BUNCH OF ELIAS' MERCENARIES CHASING ME.
VE BEDDUH GET MOVING.

SPREAD OUT...JENSEN, TAKE YOUR TEAM AROUND BACK!
REMEMBER, THE BIG ONE STOLE MY PACK-RIFLE, SO DON'T BUNCH UP!
NOBODY HERE, CAPTAIN...
DIS LOOKS LIKE A GUT PLACE, BRUDDA.
JA.
HERE, FELLOW. YOU PROTECT DA LIDDLE GIRL VIT DIS.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?
DEY NICE PEOPLE, BEE-NUT.
SURE. DAT'S A CUTE LIDDLE GIRL.
WHERE THE HELL ARE THEY GOING?

LOOK OUT!
CRAK
RIPP
RIPP
RIPPP
KSSS
LAHK'S BLOOD...

WHSH
CHOP CHOP
RIP
THEY'RE OUT THERE SHREDDING MERCENARIES LIKE LAST NIGHT'S *SQUIRREL MEAT*.
...WHAT ABOUT ME?
...WHY AM I JUST *SITTING* HERE?
SSWHSSS
WHAM
SOME BLOODY *HERO* I'M TURNING OUT TO BE.
END OF CHAPTER 3
©96

MR MURRAY © IN MAIL ORDER BRIDE FROM SPACE

©1993 CARNEY TAYLOR

ian carney & dave taylor for tor.

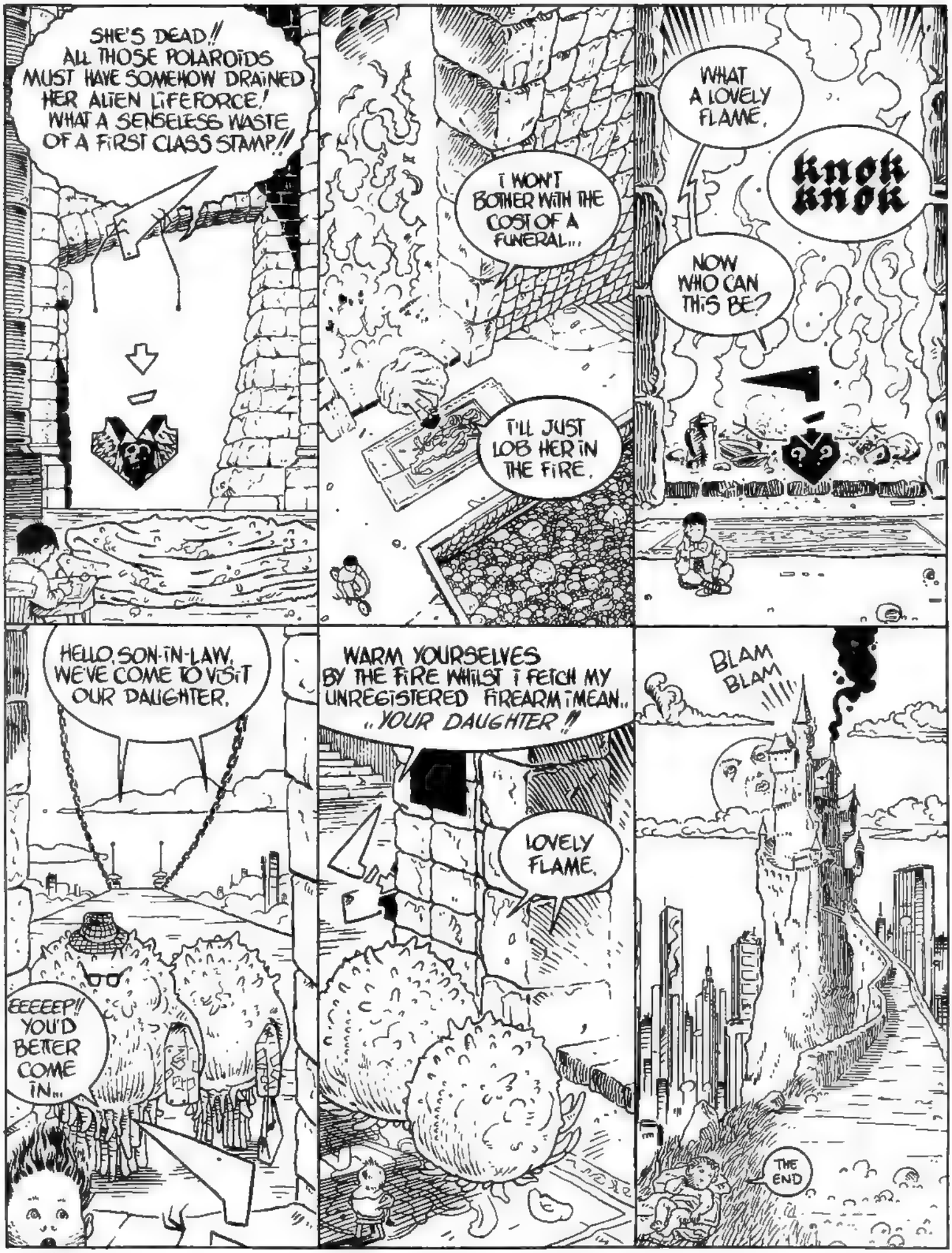
MR MURRAY IS FEELING LONELY..
LIFE IS BLEAK! BEING TWO DIME-ENSIONAL IS A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO MEETING GALS!
WHAT'S THIS IN THE NEWSPAPER..?? MAIL ORDER BRIDES FROM SPACE ?!! JUST FILL IN A COUPON TO ORDER...
NOW... SENTIENT OR NON-SENTIENT? I DON'T CARE AS LONG AS SHE HAS PRIMARY FEMALE SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS.
MAIL ORDER BRIDE FROM SPACE
NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED. I HOPE SHE LOOKS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN 'MOTHRA' AND THE THIN ONE FROM 'THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS'!
BACK AT THE HOUSE..
WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S YOUR MAIL ORDER BRIDE...
FROM SPACE
FRAGILE
CONTENTS: ONE WIFE
ALREADY?!!!
YUP! JUST SIGN THIS RECEIPT/MARRIAGE LICENCE AN' SHE'S ALL YOUR'S...

INSIDE...
NOW LET'S SEE WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE!
THIS IS AS EXCITING AS THAT DYSLEXIC TELLERFOHN!!
HMMMM... NOT WHAT I EXPECTED. BUT I SUPPOSE CAPTAIN KIRK'S GOT FIRST DABS ON ALL THE SEXY ALIENS... BAHH!!
NEVER MIND. SHE'LL STILL LOOK HOT IN THIS LYCRA, PUMP ACTION, THRILL FABRICATED NEGLIGÉ!!
JUST HOLD THAT POSE WHILE I HIT THE LIGHTS...
TWO'D TROJAN FOR THAT TWO DIMENSIONAL EXPERIENCE
SAFE SEX SUBLIMINAL
THRUST
WHUP
Splidge
ba-ba
chapok
SPLAP
NEXT MORNING...
WOW!! WHAT A NIGHT OF HOT LOVE ACTION! I WAS GREAT! SENSITIVE AND DOUBLE-JOINTED!

EEEEEP! WHAT'S THIS? CHILDREN ?!! THE ALIENS REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM MUST BE EXTREMELY FAST.!
PAPA
I'M TOO YOUNG TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KIDS. THESE THINGS LOOK LIKE SLUGS SO THIS SALT WILL GET RID OF THEM !!
NON PAPA!
MERCI !!
PAPAAAAA
HA HA / THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
WHAT AN EFFECTIVE CONTRA-CEPTIVE!
CHARLIE TROUSERS© CALLS 'ROUND.
WOW..MURRAY. YOUR BRIDE IS CHA-CHA-CHA!
I'D PAY £2 FOR A POLAROID OF HER!
REALLY...
GET YOUR SPACE NUDES!!
BETTER THAN 'READER'S WIVES'...
STELLA PORNER
£5
SOLD OUT! WHO SAID SMALL ENTERPRISE WAS DEAD! I'VE GOT TO GET BACK AN' TAKE MORE PICCIES... HE HE HE HE HEE!!

NOTE: THIS ● IS CHAZ TROUSERS' ONLY APPEARANCE IN THIS STRIP.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!! PHONE IAN CARNEY ON 051 6484 7043 (EX. 24) NOW. CALLS CHARGED AT LOCAL RATES.


SHE'S DEAD!! ALL THOSE POLAROIDS MUST HAVE SOMEHOW DRAINED HER ALIEN LIFEFORCE! WHAT A SENSELESS WASTE OF A FIRST CLASS STAMP!!
I WON'T BOTHER WITH THE COST OF A FUNERAL...
I'LL JUST LOB HER IN THE FIRE.
WHAT A LOVELY FLAME.
KNOK KNOK
NOW WHO CAN THIS BE?
HELLO, SON-IN-LAW. WE'VE COME TO VISIT OUR DAUGHTER.
EEEEEP!! YOU'D BETTER COME IN...
WARM YOURSELVES BY THE FIRE WHILST I FETCH MY UNREGISTERED FIREARM I MEAN.. ..YOUR DAUGHTER!!
LOVELY FLAME.
BLAM BLAM
THE END

JIM MURRAY IN MAIL ORDER BRIDE FROM SPACE

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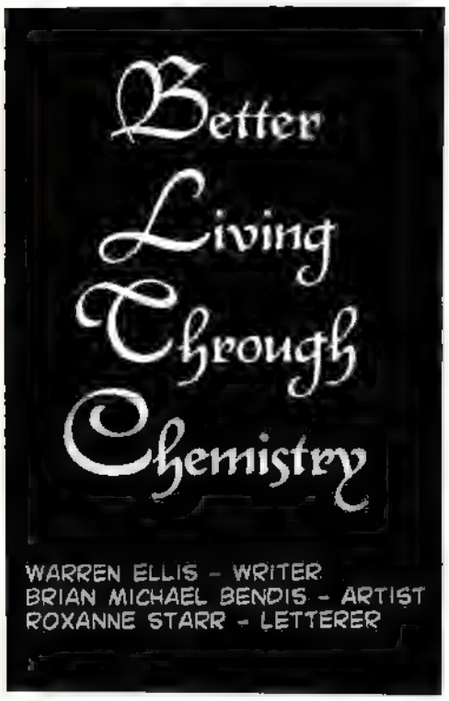
ian carney dave taylor for tor.


Better Living Through Chemistry
WARREN ELLIS - WRITER
BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS - ARTIST
ROXANNE STARR - LETTERER

CALL ME LEARY.

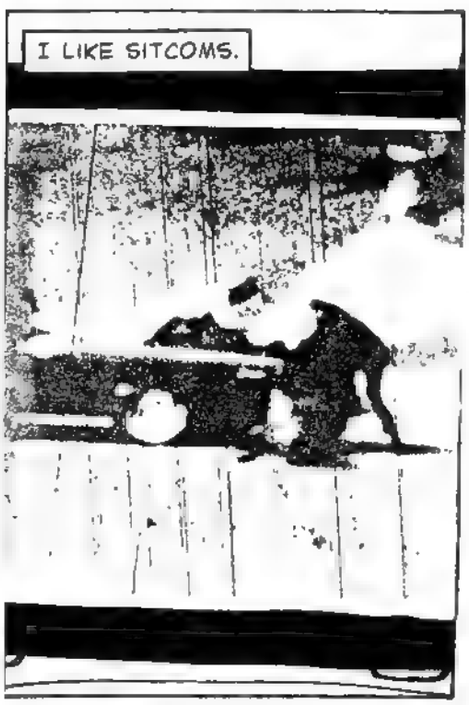
I LIVE AND WORK HERE IN THE BIG CITY, AND I HAVE A GOOD JOB. HECK, YES.

I GOT MARRIED ONCE, BUT I SOBERED UP.
WHO NEEDS IT? I GOT MY PLEASURES AND I GOT MY JOB. RIGHT?

I DON'T TOUCH DRUGS.
DRUGS MESS WITH MY LIFE AND MY JOB.

U.S. Army Narcotic Environment project
I'M HIGH ON LIFE.

SO YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT MY PLEASURES ARE NOW, RIGHT?
WELL, I'M NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT.


I LIKE SITCOMS.

MOST MORNINGS, I WALK TO WORK.
I KNOW, IT MAKES ME SOUND CRAZY.

BUT I LIKE THE CITY AIR FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.

ONCE IN THE OFFICE, I SET TO THE DAY'S BUSINESS.
I WORK LIKE A DOG FOR MY MONEY, BUT IT'S WORTH IT.

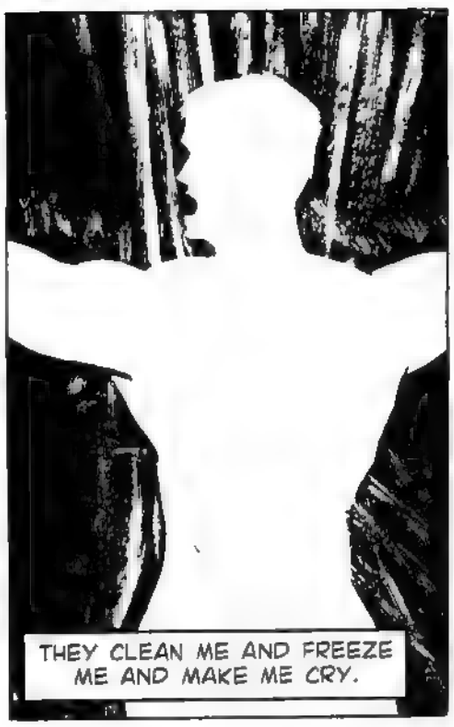
I HAVE THIS THING GOING WITH MY SECRETARY.
IT'S A WORK THING--IT ENDS AT FIVE-THIRTY EVERY DAY, LIKE THE JOB, AND WE HAVE WEEKENDS OFF.

SHE FELLATES ME WITH INTELLIGENCE, WHITE-GLOVED FINGERS MOVING ON ME EXPERTLY.
I DON'T TOUCH HER. WE'RE A CLASS ACT. AND SHE NEVER EVER MENTIONS THE SCABS ON IT.

AND THEN HER EYES GO WRONG AND RAZORBLADES DEPLOY FROM HER UPPER PALATE AND RUSTY NAILS EXTRUDE FROM HER TONGUE.
AND I COME BLOOD A TEXAS CHAINSAW MONEY SHOT AND...

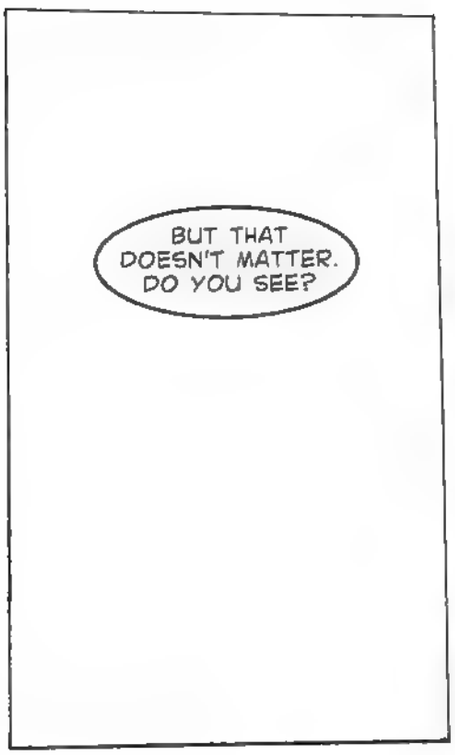
AND SUDDENLY I REALIZE THAT NOTHING HAPPENED AND MY SECRETARY IS SEVERAL FEET AWAY AND SHE'S DROOLING AND SHE NEVER TOUCHED ME, DIDN'T EVEN GET UP.
MAYBE IT WAS SOMETHING I ATE.

THIS IS A GUN. DO YOU STILL RECOGNIZE IT?
DON'T MOVE.
Narcotic Environment Project
SAFE COMPOUND
Extracted subjects to remain under armed guard at all times



AFTER A FEW DAYS, THEY DECIDE TO TALK TO ME.

THEY TELL ME I'M AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

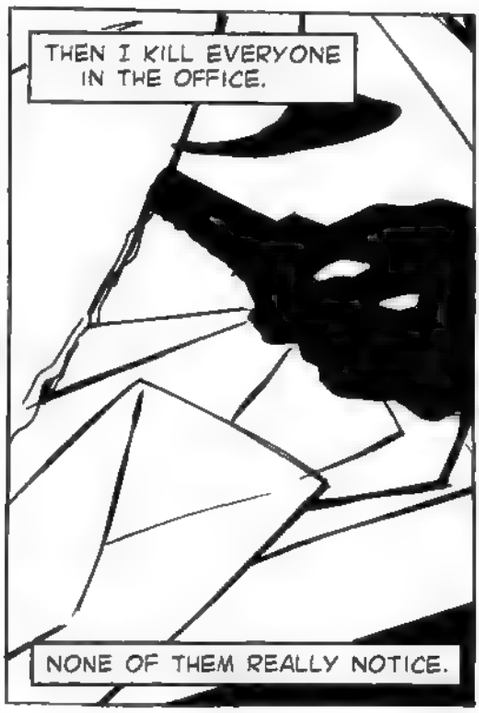


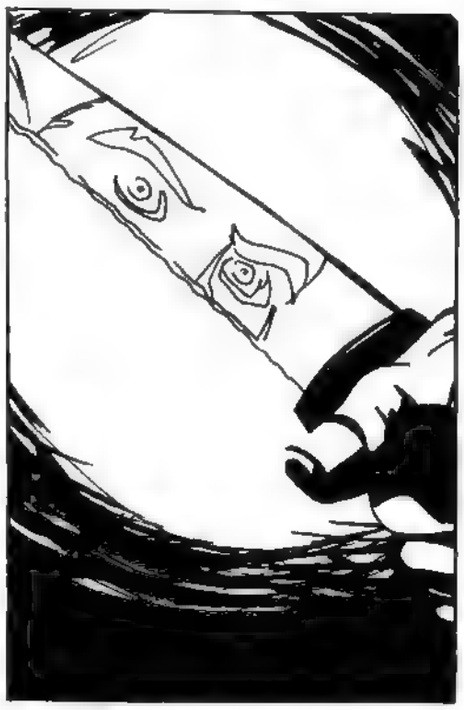
IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT WE CREATE THIS SECTION OF CITY AND FLOOD THE ENTIRE ENVIRONMENT WITH NARCOTICS.
THE INFORMATION IS VERY VALUABLE.
OUR ENEMIES WOULD LIKE TO CONTROL OUR MINDS. YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?
AND NOW THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO.
WE'VE LEARNED VALUABLE INFORMATION FROM CONTROLLING YOURS. AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS'.
AND THEN THE BASTARDS PUT ME BACK IN THE CITY.

IT'S NOT A REAL CITY.
NOTHING WORKS. I WAS SO FUCKED UP I THOUGHT I WAS TALKING TO PEOPLE ON THESE TOY PHONES.
I NEARLY BREAK MY HAND GETTING INSIDE MY APARTMENT--THE ARMY BURNED MY CLOTHES, AND MY KEYS WERE IN MY PANTS.
I WISH I HADN'T BOTHERED.
OLD FOOD EVERYWHERE. CLOTHES SOAKED IN PISS.
ABOUT SIX WEEKS WORTH OF SHIT ON AND AROUND THE SOFA I WATCH TV FROM.
DRUGS IN THE FOOD, THE WATER, THE CIGARETTES, THE AIR. ALL OF US ETERNALLY HALLUCINATING.
JUST BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.
AND NOW I'VE BEEN FLUSHED OUT AND FILLED WITH COUNTERAGENTS. THE ENVIRONMENT WON'T AFFECT ME FOR WEEKS.
BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO A SINGLE SANE MAN IN A MAD CITY.
I'M NOT A DEEP MAN.
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT--I'M A SHALLOW LITTLE FUCKER. I HAD A JOB AND I LIKED IT, AND THAT WAS IT.
I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I CRIED, BUT NOW I CAN HARDLY STOP.
I WAS HAPPY BEFORE.

I WALK TO WORK IN THE MORNING.
THE CITY STINKS OF SPOILED MEAT AND VOIDED BOWELS. I CAN'T BELIEVE I NEVER NOTICED THE DEAD BEFORE.
OR THE SOLDIERS.
THEY'RE WATCHING ME. THEY REPORT ON MY REACTIONS.

AT THE OFFICE, I TELL THEM I'M QUITTING. ONE NEAR-LUCID GIRL GIGGLES AT ME.
I GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS, SLITTING OPEN FAKE LETTERS STUFFED WITH BLANK PAPER.


THEN I KILL EVERYONE IN THE OFFICE.
NONE OF THEM REALLY NOTICE.



THEY GO HAPPY. FOR ME, THAT'S VALUABLE INFORMATION. THE ONLY INFORMATION THEY'RE GIVING NOW.
I STAY WITH THE DEAD UNTIL TWELVE. I CUDDLE THE LONELIER-LOOKING ONES.
THEN I GO OUT TO LUNCH.

Carla Allison
in
Flowers
© McCrea 21/23-9-89

CARLA WAS WATCHING TV AND DRINKING BEER.
YO, WILLY, YOU DIRTWAD.
KNOCK KNOCK
SHIT, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY FAVOURITE SHOW.
YES?
12

MISS ALLISON? I'M FROM 'FRANK'S FLORAL FLOWERS'. THIS FINE BOUQUET IS FOR YOU. THERE'S A CARD INSIDE.
NO NAME.
Carla, Despite our past differences, I'd still like us to be friends.
WHO'RE THEY FROM, I WONDER?
I BET THEY'RE FROM THAT BASTARD, MIKE.
WELL, SOD HIM.
SMASH.

OH, WHAT A LOVELY BUNCH OF FLOWERS.
BOOM!
END

Ship of Fools

DOIN' TIME

CREATED AND DRAWN BY MICHAEL AVON OEMING

CO-CREATED AND WRITTEN BY BRYAN J.L. GLASS

I HIT HIM.
IMPACT. LITTLE RESISTANCE. MOUTH WIDENS. LEATHER SKIN RIPS LIKE RIPPED LEATHER SKIN. BLOOD SPRAYS MY FACE. WARM. SUNLIGHT IS WARM.
THEY ALL STARE AT ME. BAR PATRONS AND THEIR BEER. DO I WEAR FUNNY SHOES? NO MATTER, I HAVE TIME...WRIST-DEEP IN ANOTHER.

DAMN. HE JUST ASKED YOU FOR THE TIME.
ARE YOU SOME KINDA LUNATIC?
WATTSA PROB, SKEEV?
MR. HAPPY-HAND, THERE ...PUNCHED ODI'S CLOCK. KILL'D 'IM!
ODI HAD ALOTTA FRIENDS HERE, STRANGER. BUT THEN I GUESSES YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT.
SHIRO. I AM SHIRO.
AIN'TZ THAT JUZ FLOZZY! WELL, MR. SHIRO, YUZ KILL'D OUR PAL AN THAT LEAVES YEW... OUTTA TIME!
TIME? NO, IT'S MINE!

I AM SURROUNDED. JEALOUS. IGNORANT. FOOLS. THEY ASK FOR WHAT I'M RELUCTANT TO PART WITH.
I STAND AWASH IN THE BLOOD OF THE COVETOUS. I KNOW TO COVET IS A SIN.
I HIT. MY FUNNY SHOES HAVE HARD SOLES. THERE IS BREAKING OF BONE. SCREAMS. I HIT. I HIT. I HIT.
I AM ANGRY. TO KEEP WHAT IS MINE, I MUST GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT...A MOMENT OF MY TIME.

PLAY TIME'S OVER, PAL!
KRK!
NO, NO ...PLEASE... KEEP IT...KEEP THE WATCH. NO CHARGE...FREE SAMPLE!
THANK YOU. NOW I UNDERSTAND ...TIME.
WHAT?! YOU WANT MORE? HERE, TAKE 'EM. THEY'RE HOT ANYWAY!
NO. YOUR TIME IS YOUR OWN. ONE CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MUCH ON HAND.
THE HOUR BEGINS

2:00...THAT MEANS SOMETHING.
I EXIT THE BAR. PATRONS ARE RUDE. SUNLIGHT BATHES MY FACE. WARM. BLOOD IS WARM.
THERE. ANOTHER BAR. I'M THIRSTY.
IT'S 2:00...NO!
2:01...THAT MEANS SOMETHING.
THE END

Colleen Doran

SKETCHBOOK

ATHENA REGINA
Goddess of Love
MEN ADORE ME DAMMIT!
TM©DORAN '96

ATHENA REGINA SAYS-
ATHENA BEAUTY TIPS!
MY VEGETARIANISM GIVES ME MY HEALTHY GLOW AND LUSCIOUS FIGURE
FEMININE PRINTS!
DON'T FORGET TO DRINK PLENTY OF WATER!
SO GOOD FOR THE COMPLEXION!
FORM FLATTERING FASHIONS
MEN JUST LOVE A WOMAN WITH JIGGLE!
DELICATE, PETITE HANDBAG!
EXERCISE! LOVE THOSE CURVES!
WE ALL LOVE AND ENVY ATHENA REGINA!
DON'T FORGET TO LET YOUR SPANDEX GO THREADBARE IN THE ASS! IT ADDS A LOVELY CONTOUR EFFECT TO YOUR BUTT!
YOU'RE JEALOUS OF ME! ALL OF YOU, DAMMIT, JEALOUS
IT'S MY BREASTS, ISN'T IT!?! YOU WISH YOU WERE HALF AS WOMANLY!
MY BEAUTY AND TALENT! YOU'LL ALL HATE ME! JEALOUS!
WORSHIP ME

Mood Swing

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letters

Andy Bailey
INTERNET:
andyb@thenet.co.uk

Dear Joe,

Thanks for printing Chris Moeller's "Iron Empires". I've enjoyed this title since his first 3-parter in DHP. and the exquisitely painted 4-part series for Dark Horse. But can you tell me if this has appeared anywhere else previously? Chris seems to have so much background to his stories worked out that it appears to have been running for years.

This segment of "Iron Empires" features all-new material done exclusively for NEGATIVE BURN, Andy. Chris will be starting on another fully painted IRON EMPIRES series coming from DC sometime in late '97, so be on the look out for that.

Greg Greene
INTERNET:
editor@waldo.nashv.lib.tn.us

Joe,

Congratulations on hooking Chris Moeller for NEGATIVE BURN. His whole IRON EMPIRES saga (formerly SHADOW EMPIRES) is a complex and well-wrought epic, and I'm glad to see Caliber getting a piece of it. It's not often that an artist's black and white line work can stack up to his painted art, but Chris manages very well in both departments. While showcasing new talent and experimental stories may be your primary goal in NEGATIVE BURN, work like IRON EMPIRES lends your anthology a mark of high craft and professionalism. I hope singling out one artist doesn't make light of the others. NEGATIVE BURN #33 was a great issue as a whole. The artistic quality of the series continues to rise. Thanks for your hard work, Joe!

So, do all of you like this Chris Moeller guy or what? Good. I'm glad I'm not the only one.

Olav Beemer
Zeist, The Netherlands

Dear Joe,

NEGATIVE BURN #33 has hit the stands, filled with fifteen interesting features. While past issues have been mostly interesting from cover to cover, this was one of the first mixed bag issues in quite a while. To take all the issue's features in order, here we go.

"Iron Empires" seems interesting and nice enough, but the installment presented here lacked balance. The first page was too full with explanatory text compared to the following seven pages, most of which hardly contained any text at all. Other than that, I do like the environment in which the story takes place—from hi-tech weapons to malicious and deadly lizard men—as it creates a potential for the follow-up installment to this story, two issues from now, can use to make the tale a very entertaining one. For now, the jury is still out on this one, though.

"Mr. Mamoulian" was delightful this time around. Playing badminton at times myself, I couldn't help but chuckle at several of the tiny jokes Brian Bolland has managed to slip into this enjoyable one-page piece of fun. Thumbs up.

"T.O.M. Foolery", while presenting great artwork in exactly the style I usually like very much, didn't do much for me, I'm afraid to say. The story kept on moving forward at an incredible pace without ever being all too clear on exactly what was going on. Although some nice jokes were to be found in this story, I found the overall execution of it to be not exactly what I had hoped for.

"Zombie Kid and Dancing Robot" delivered some more hilarious Greg DiGenti material. As always, he manages to portray entertaining character interaction which stops just bordering the completely absurd and just short of getting plain silly. Of course, the powerful artwork makes me come back for more as well, as the weirdness in it is second to none.

"No Regrets" was too short this time to really get into the story. When multi-part storylines are being included in these pages, it's essential that every chapter is as accessible as possible. The chapter at hand here, though, brought forth too few points of important development and, as I said, was just too short to be truly interesting. Still, I'm intrigued to see how this tale works out.

"Making Contact" was a short and sweet feature with some powerful images all portraying different aspects of the same term, while "My Life As Riley" also was short and sweet, breathing an atmosphere very well created by Matthew Smith and Michael Gaydos. Rounding off this batch of short stories, "The Creep" proved to be original, off-beat and full of potential for upcoming stories from the hands of Phil Hester. Hopefully, this will be touched upon in the upcoming on-going series.

"Recognition" was the most impressive feature of this very issue, with little dialogue combined with a number of very intelligently written and powerful captions, a captivating sequence of events has been portrayed which have led to that disturbing ending page. Even though tales

Internet: 72164.1134@CompuServe P.O. Box 893 Acworth,GA 30101

about Vietnam veterans are nowhere near something novel, I like Jim Frier's take on it and hereby express my hopes of seeing more of this in this book soon.

"Acid Lad" didn't work for me, while I liked the artwork, and the same holds true for "Charon", except that it was the story I liked with this particular feature. Both had nice aspects, but not enough to make me truly enjoy what I saw and what I was reading.

"Nowheresville" most assuredly was the most untraditional feature of the issue, as Mark Ricketts's style of writing and drawing this short tale worked out rather well. Using photographs as the background for the comic characters makes each page unique and a tiny story on its own, while the pieces of text all throughout the tale mesh very well with the off-beat art. Very nice work, indeed.

"Project High: On the Bus" was another short and sweet, chronicling what must be a familiar situation for many school children, while "Jackknife" rates as the least entertaining and least tasteful installment of the issue, portraying characters which truly are the most despicable of modern society.

Fortunately, the final feature of the issue, "American Dilemma" had a few interesting points so NEGATIVE BURN #33 ended on a rather positive note anyways.

So that's a nine-out-of-fifteen, maybe even ten-out-of-fifteen. Not even close to bad, but not as good as say the last seven issues either. It'll be interesting to see where the next issue will stand.

I was able to go watch Brian Bolland play a badminton match while I was visiting England last spring and I have to say that it wasn't what I expected. It was fast-paced and very competitive with a lot of strategy involved. I consider myself a sportsman but I chickened out when I was asked to play. I've learned to stick to the sports that I already know how to play. I'll never look at Brian or badminton the same way again. I only wish the pictures I took of the match had come out so I could have printed them in these pages so the whole world could see Brian in shorts. Believe me, it's a sight you wouldn't want to miss. Well, on second thought...

Michael Overfield
Petal, MS

Mr. Pruett,

My subscription started with #30 and is up to #33. Here is a quick rundown of personal favorites: "The Promise", "Acid Lad", "Targets", "The Abyss Also Grasps", "The Factor: Protection", "Survivors", and "Kilroy: Without Reason."

Best issue so far, #32. Least favorite, #33. Go figure?

P.S. The 64-page count is excellent.

Glad you're enjoying your subscription, Michael. Be sure to check back in and let us know what you've liked about the last few issues as well.

Dziubas Laurent
Bruxelles, Belgium

Dear Joe Pruett,

This letter is about Caliber Comics in general, but NEGATIVE BURN being the anthology, I thought it was the best place to send this letter.

After reading comics for more than 15 years (I'm 27) I became bored by the basic superhero books. I continue to read some that I consider the top of the line as FLASH, HULK, etc. but I'm more interested to discover new things, things that made me move myself, my brain and my emotions. So I go to independent companies and small press.

About two years ago a dream became reality, a passion to a job, I'm working in a comics shop. I have of course Marvel, DC, Image sections, but as a Vertigo fan and a, shall we say it, Caliber zombie they have their own rack even if they are only selling a couple of copies.

Caliber was always an interesting company publishing new and fascinating creators. NEGATIVE BURN is much more captivating than DHP. But with this year, you became essential putting on the racks such titles as CAVEWOMAN, ESPERS TPB, WORDSMITH, etc. And now you take over some of my best series MR. X and EXIT. I was so happy when I learned that eventually it would continue.

My only fear is that you publish too much and that all falls apart. You try to go in every direction: creator-owned, adventure, superheroes, etc. All I hope is that there won't be any reversal of fortune.

I don't think you have anything to worry about, Dziubas. Caliber is on pretty stable ground right now. In fact, Caliber's doing better than they ever have. I'm also glad to see you sampling the other titles that Caliber offers. There's a lot of diverse and exciting projects coming up as well. I can't wait till I can tell you about them.

IMPORTANT NOTES

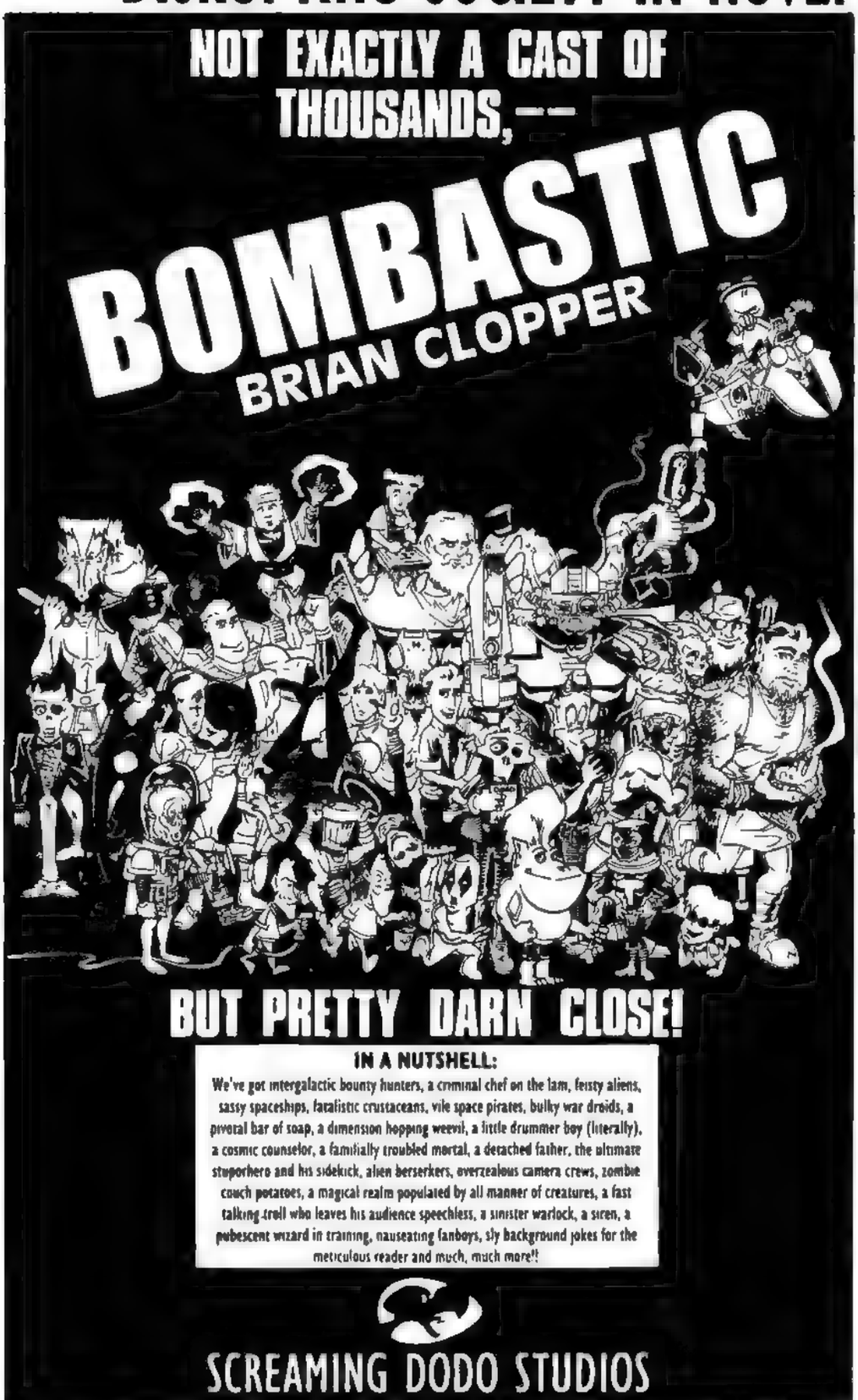
Last issue we showed you a spotlight story of Brian Clopper's upcoming self-published series, FEVER PITCH. Well, wouldn't you know it but between that issue going to print and this issue coming out he's had to change the name of his series. So now the new name of what was formerly FEVER PITCH is now BOMBASTIC. Regardless of the name, please do yourself a favor and check out this new series when it debuts.

Also, a few pages of original art from the "Iron Empires" story from NEGATIVE BURN #35 were lost in the mail between myself and the letterer, Roxanne Starr, a couple of months ago. The package has not turned up so if anyone happens to come across any pages from that particular issue please let me or Chris know, because they may be stolen.

Okay, that's it for this issue. Hope you enjoyed NEGATIVE BURN's 3rd Anniversary Issue and are looking forward to our four year anniversary next summer. Nobody gave us much of a chance to last this long, so I'd like to thank all of you readers out there who come back each month and continue to support NB. Your help is always greatly appreciated. Thanks.

Joe Pruett
editor

DISRUPTING SOCIETY IN NOVEMBER


NOT EXACTLY A CAST OF THOUSANDS,--
BOMBASTIC
BRIAN CLOPPER
BUT PRETTY DARN CLOSE!
IN A NUTSHELL:
We've got intergalactic bounty hunters, a criminal chef on the lam, feisty aliens, sassy spaceships, fatalistic crustaceans, vile space pirates, bulky war droids, a pivotal bar of soap, a dimension hopping weevil, a little drummer boy (literally), a cosmic counselor, a familially troubled mortal, a detached father, the ultimate stuporhero and his sidekick, alien berserkers, overzealous camera crews, zombie couch potatoes, a magical realm populated by all manner of creatures, a fast talking troll who leaves his audience speechless, a sinister warlock, a siren, a pubescent wizard in training, nauseating fanboys, sly background jokes for the meticulous reader and much, much more!!
SCREAMING DODO STUDIOS

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"Brian Clopper's BOMBASTIC is a thoroughly enjoyable, mad-cap, fun-for-the-whole-family comic that you should definitely give a second look. The writing is witty and the art and production are top notch and professional. Don't miss this one!"
-Joe Pruett
Negative Burn
Kilroy is Here

"BOMBASTIC is a delightful new series. I'm glad Brian Clopper is joining the self publishing market. We need new and original stuff like his."
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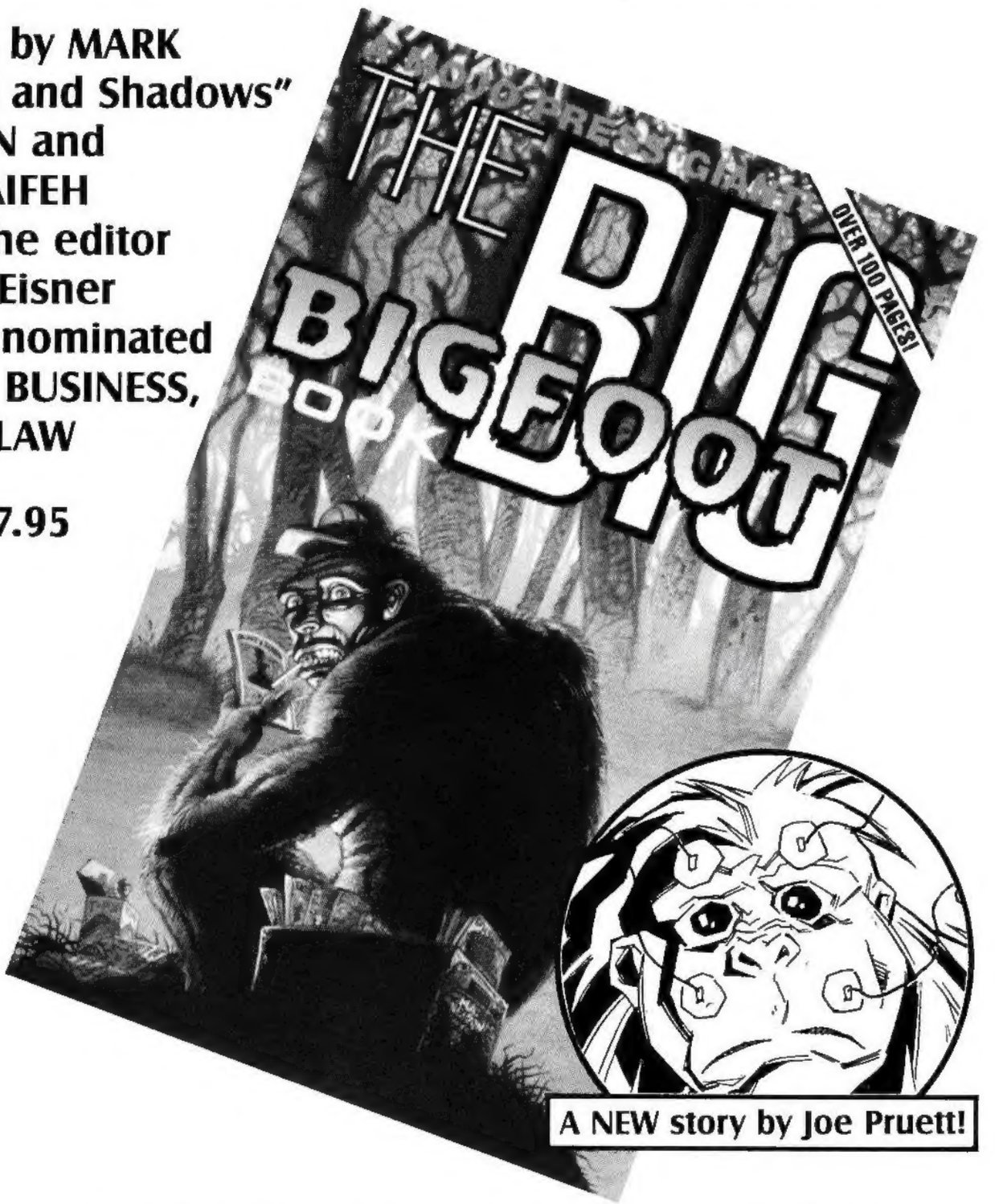

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